



City of Baltimore Department of Public Works

600 ABEL WOLMAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202

SHEILA DIXON, MAYOR

GEORGE L. WINFIELD, DIRECTOR

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Brrrrrrrr!

Protect Your Pipes.

This has been an unseasonably warm winter – until now! Forecasters are predicting that temperatures will dip well below freezing tonight. Pipes and utility meters can freeze when the temperature remains below 25 degrees for extended periods of time. The Baltimore City Department of Public Works offers the following tips to help protect water lines during periods of cold weather: Let a thin stream of cold water run from a basement faucet. The stream should be a continuous flow, about the thickness of a pencil. This water can be caught in a bucket or pail to be recycled later as laundry or dish water. If your pipe is frozen, gently warm it with hot air from a blow dryer at the point where it enters your house. Be sure you know the location of the water shutoff valve in your home. Check it periodically to ensure it works properly. Periodically monitor your sump pump. A frozen drain pipe could result in a flooded basement. Insulate pipes in unheated parts of your house. Be especially alert if you have had frozen pipes in the past. Keep bottled water on hand.

The Department of Public Works maintains outdoor water lines up to and including the meter. Water lines running from the meter to the house, as well as internal plumbing, are the responsibility of the property owner. For water emergencies in Baltimore City, please call 311. If you are outside the City, but in our service area, please call 410-396-5352.

ADDITIONAL COLD WEATHER TIPS CAN BE FOUND IN YOUR 2007 DPW CALENDAR AND ON OUR WEBSITE.



Contact:

Kurt L. Kocher

Telephone: 410-545-6541

email: Kurt.Kocher@Baltimorecity.gov

ALL DPW PRESS RELEASES CAN BE FOUND AT: www.BaltimoreCity.gov



PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES AND COLD WEATHER

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:

Various city agencies work together to respond to emergency situations. These could range from floods and snowstorms to hurricanes and even to terrorist attacks. You should be prepared with an emergency kit. Be sure to have these supplies on hand to cope with any weather or other emergency:

Heating oil	Flashlights	Medicine	Portable radio	Corded phone	Plastic tarp
Extra, fresh batteries	Blankets	Bottled water	Canned foods	Manual can opener	Duct tape

Keep a cash supply ready to be used in case ATMs or banks are unavailable.

Remember! During an emergency, keep phone lines clear! Nonemergency calls will tax the communication system and may interfere with responses to life-threatening situations!

In case of an emergency, please tune to your local radio or television station for information. If evacuation is ordered and if time allows, be sure to take important documents and medical information with you including:

- Driver's license or personal identification
- Social Security card
- Proof of residence (deed or lease)
- Insurance policies
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Wills, deeds and copies of recent tax returns
- Contracts, stocks, bonds and other negotiable certificates
- Passports and immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers
- Inventory of household goods
- Important telephone numbers
- Medical records, health insurance cards and prescriptions.

Around the house when the temperature plunges:

Keep a pencil-thin flow of water running from pipes to avoid freezing.

Empty water from garden hoses.

Turn off water to outside faucets.

Clear snow from fire hydrants and storm drains.

Use emergency numbers for actual emergencies only.

Do not shovel snow into the street.

Assist your elderly and disabled neighbors.

Bring your pets inside.

Call 911 **only** for life-threatening or property-damaging emergencies!

Call **311** for all other concerns.

Life saving facts:

Check smoke detector batteries.

Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning!

Have your furnace professionally cleaned and inspected.

Maintain proper ventilation in your vehicle.

Do not use your oven or kerosene stoves **for heat**.

Do not use portable generators in your house or near open doors and windows.



WINTER WATER TIPS

Guard Against Cold Drafts

Since most water meters and pipes are located in unheated areas, they are vulnerable when temperatures dip below freezing. Even a small draft of cold air through a cracked basement window, window sill, or foundation during extremely cold periods could cause freezing conditions. Without ample heat, over time, the cold can even penetrate a well-insulated wall.

If your pipes are in a closed location, leave a door to a heated room open to warm the area. You should also:

- Repair broken or cracked windows and walls.
- Replace standard windows in your basement with storm windows.
- Close tightly all windows and doors to the outside.
- Insulate outside walls.
- Eliminate drafts from crawl spaces.
- Periodically monitor your sump pump.
- Keep bottled water on hand.
- Report water main breaks, leaking hydrants or exterior water leaks to our One Call Center by dialing [311](#).

Prevent Problems

Frozen water meters and household pipes can freeze you out of water service and can be expensive to repair or replace. Before it gets any colder, take preventive steps to protect your water meter and pipes from freezing and check them frequently during cold periods. If you plan to vacation during the cold weather months, be sure to ask a friend or family member to check your home periodically while you are away.

Protect Your Water Meter

Water meters are tested and examined by inspectors for accuracy, but they can be damaged by freezing conditions. If your water meter freezes, the Bureau of Water and Wastewater can use proper equipment to thaw your meter. Meters are designed with a casing to prevent damage to internal parts.

Protect Your Water Pipes

Water inside pipes can freeze when temperatures drop. If water lines do freeze, it is the resident's responsibility to have them thawed or repaired. Protect pipes now by insulating them and outside walls and by providing a source of heat. For example, if your kitchen sink is installed against an outside wall, insulate the wall and open the cabinets underneath the sink to allow warm air to reach the pipes. Take the following additional precautions:

- Check the temperature near your pipes frequently during cold periods.
(Remember, cold settles near the floor and along the walls, so place the thermometer close to the pipe for an accurate reading.)
- Remove water hoses from outside connections.
- Turn off the water to outdoor faucets and drain the pipes. Frozen water lines or pipes inside your home can begin with a frozen outside faucet.
- Allow water to trickle from a faucet at the lowest point in your basement to prevent pipes from freezing.

When Meters and Pipes Freeze

Don't panic if your water meter or pipes freeze. First, open a faucet near the meter or frozen pipes to release any vapor from melting ice. You'll know if the ice is melting when water begins to run through the open faucet. You should be familiar with the location of your main water shutoff valve and individual sink valves so you can quickly turn off the water if a pipe does burst.

Baltimore City residents can dial [311](#) to request assistance with a frozen water meter. An inspector will be assigned to come out, assess any possible complications and make corrections or give proper recommendations. However, if your pipes freeze, please contact a plumbing professional for assistance. Baltimore City is not responsible for the maintenance or repair of pipes within your property line.